

Dear members of the Human Services Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Yoni Alvarado, I am from New Haven.

I am in favor of S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN FOR AN INCOME ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN HEALTH CARE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY to age 18, regardless of immigration status, is an important step in ensuring that our immigrant community has access to the health care we need. But our work doesn't end with expanding access to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and health care to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

I am a parent and an essential worker, cleaning clinics. It is important to pass this legislation because there are quite a few children coming here, who similar to me, are uninsured. Medical care here costs a lot of money, and many parents don't have the means to pay.

My nephew, for example, came here very young and broke his ribs, and unfortunately we didn't have the money for him to have surgery so we had to send him back to Guatemala. But not everyone has the financial ability or family support to do that. Thank God, my children do have health insurance and it makes a huge difference. They can go to their appointments, get their teeth fixed, get general checkups. For the parents of other children without insurance it is a big blow, and they don't have the ability to pay.

I, personally, would have been dead without the Free Clinic in New Haven because there is no money for all the appointments and medications I need. I also got coronavirus and last year I suffered a lot of long term consequences. This year I also got omicron. Things are getting better now, but it would completely change my life to have a stable medical insurance with which I can go to the clinics and the hospital and not take out a large amount of money that I don't have. Sometimes, we have to delay paying rent or borrow money to pay for our health care. It would give me peace of mind to have access to insurance, and I support this bill to give health insurance to the neediest children.

I support S.B. 284 and ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Going forward, I ask the committee to work to open access to all immigrants, regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,

Yoni Alvarado